

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 26, 2007 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

The present Amendment revises the claims to make them more concise and to otherwise improve their form under US patent practice. The present Amendment also inserts a new limitation into claim 1 in order to further distinguish the cited references. This new limitation is that the receiving apparatuses are “in the same network segment as the transmitting apparatus.” As is known in the art, a “network segment” is a portion of a network (or possibly all of the network) in which every device communicates using the same physical layer. This change to claim 1 is supported (for example) by Figures 1 and 3 of the application’s drawings. The present Amendment also adds a new set of claims, 5-9, to further protect the invention.

Section 2 of the Office Action rejects claim 1 for indefiniteness. It is respectfully submitted, though, that the revisions to claim 1 overcome the rejection.

Section 4 of the Office Action rejects all of the claims for obviousness based on US patent 7,046,666 to Bollay et al (hereafter simply “Bollay”) and US patent 6,925,079 to Matsukawa. The Office Action takes the general position that the Bollay reference discloses most of what was recited in the previous version of claim 1, but acknowledges that Bollay does not disclose transmitting a request from a transmitting apparatus to each receiving apparatus for the IP and MAC addresses of the receiving apparatuses if there is a defect in a connection. The Office Action takes the position, though, that it would have been obvious to modify Bolley to do this in view of Matsukawa.

As was noted above, claim 1 now provides that the transmitting apparatus of the claim and the receiving apparatuses of the claim are all in the same network segment. In Bolley, though, different network segments are connected by routers or switches. The object of Bolley’s invention is to facilitate communication between devices in these separate network segments. Matsukawa is directed to detecting address duplication in a single network segment (which may, however, include a router). There is no apparent reason why an ordinarily skilled person who wanted to improve Bolley’s arrangement for improving communication between network segments would think that Matsukawa’s technique for detecting address duplication within a single network segment would be useful in this endeavor.

The Office Action points to a sentence, in column 3 of Matsukawa, as disclosing transmission of a request for the IP address on a MAC address to each of the receiving apparatuses when a defect in the line connection (duplicate IP addresses) exists. What the sentence at column 3 of Matsukawa actually says, though, is that a ARP request packet can be used to obtain a MAC address corresponding to an IP address.

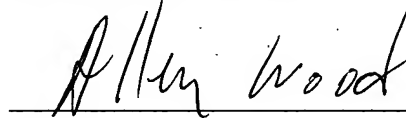
In view of these considerations, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by independent claim 1 is patentable over the references.

New independent claim 5 provides that a transmitting apparatus and a plurality of receiving apparatuses are all connected to the same physical layer, so the invention defined by claim 5 is patentable over the references for similar reasons. In addition, claim 5 expressly recites a step of "detecting whether or not the transmitting apparatus is connected over the network to the desired one of the receiving apparatuses." A "deciding" step in claim 5 depends on the results of this "detecting" step. If the desired one of the receiving apparatuses is not detected as being connected, a procedure that comprises "seeking a new IP address that has been assigned to the desired one of the receiving apparatuses" is executed. Such detecting and deciding and seeking of a new IP address are not suggested by the references.

The remaining claims depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitations to further define the inventions. They are therefore patentable along with their independent claims and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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AMENDMENT

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